

Poetry.

A VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

Rev. 14 : 13.

REV. S. M. OSMOND, D. D.

Never fell a sweeter message
On a saddened listener's ear,
Than the one that to the prophet
Brought its all-availing cheer,
When the voice from heaven said :
"Write, that blessed are the dead !"

For before him in a vision,
The unfolding future passed,
And he saw the Church of Jesus
Storm-beleagured to the last ;
Whilst its myriad martyrs fell
Battling with "the gates of hell."

Faces fair with saintly beauty
Paled and darkened in his sight,
And earth's noblest vanished from it,
Leaving but enshrouding night ;
Save so light, like dawn, glowed red
Where their martyr-blood was shed.

In the catacombs' recesses,
In unnoted graves they slept ;
Or from smouldering pyres their ashes
On the heedless winds were swept ;
Or of savage beasts the prey,
Still their bones unburied lay.

How the heart of John, so tender,
Must have melted into grief,
Ere the timely voice from heaven
Brought the balm of its relief,
Quelled the anguish and the dread
With its "Blessed are the dead !"

Then he knew, with trust unshaken
In the heaven-attested word,
That the faithful who had suffered
For their ever-living Lord,
Though they died, yet lived again,
Nor had lived or died in vain.

They had triumphed in their failure,
They had found their gain in loss,
They had won the crown that cometh
By the bearing of the cross ;
Long with painful toils oppressed,
But the deeper now their rest.

Nor in all their high endeavor
Had there failed or perished aught,
Since the good for which they travailed
Was with deathless vigor fraught,
And should sway the world at last,
When its chastening woes were past.

Contributions.

TRANSFORMATION.

JACOB C. CASSEL.

"And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God." Romans 12 : 2.

It is not difficult to effect some kind of a change in one's life, but a transformation that will prove "what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God," is not very easily accomplished. There is some sort of transformation in the life of almost every professor of the religion of Jesus Christ ; in some it is only a change

of pretense from the world to the church, without any evident change of heart at all.

Then there is a large and fashionable class of church members that participate in all the frivolities of social life, such as the races, the games, the ball-room, and the theatre, whose only transformation consists in annually becoming pious through Lent, a period of six weeks before Easter.

There is still a more numerous class who, by the power of the pulpit are converted from the world to the church, but are not regenerated by the spirit of God, whose transformation consists in living, honorable, useful, and influential lives in the world. They are a "jolly" crowd that turns out en-mass to a feast or a picnic, but if one were to invite them to a holiness meeting there would be but few if any responses.

There is another class regenerate and unregenerate whose transformation largely centres in the style of their apparel ; many of this latter class live blameless ; even pious lives and are truly transformed by the renewal of their minds, but owing to early training imagine that a real heart and soul transformation can only be truly manifested by a certain prescribed style of dress ; this class is however diminishing and fifty years hence will only live in history. Joining church, piously keeping Lent, honorable living, and plain dressing may all be parts of a transformed life, but the writer fails to see that any or all of these things prove "what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

The will of God is variously set forth by different writers. Paul says, "this is the will of God, even your sanctification"—I Thess. 4 : 3, referring in this instance to moral purity. Again he says "in every thing give thanks ; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." I Thess. 5 : 18. The best compendium of the will of God is found in the beatitudes of the sermon on the mount. There the blessings of God are vouchsafed to those that are *poor in spirit*, to those that *mourn*, to the *meek*, to those that *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, to the *merciful*, to the *pure in heart*, to the *peace-makers*, to those that are persecuted for *righteousness sake*, and reviled for *Christ's sake*. If our lives are transformed from pride to humility, hilarity to mourning, from haughtiness to meekness, from sin to righteousness, from hard heartedness to mercifulness, from depravity to purity, from strife to peacefulness, to such an extent that we are persecuted and reviled because of those changes, we shall prove "what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God." The vast majority of church members are not thus transformed, very many because

they do not want to be, and others who desire to be fail to pursue a course that will bring about such a result. It is the latter class the writer would address for a little while.

In order to be transformed from one state or condition to another we must first feel dissatisfied with our present condition, and secondly we must have an ideal of a better or at least another state that we would attain to. This principle applies to our physical, mental, moral and spiritual life. If we are physically weak and desire health or strength, we may possibly obtain it by complying with certain rules of life, or resorting to such remedies as are supposed to meet the case ; if mentally weak we may become stronger by training and culture ; just so with our moral and spiritual infirmities, but in every case we must know that there is a better state than the one we live in or else we could not aspire to it. Upon this point many are in darkness, they do not know or believe that there is higher spiritual life than what they are living and in most instances such are not living spiritual lives at all, hence no transformation.

There is a recognized maxim in philosophy that "like makes like," or in other words that we partake to a greater or lesser degree of the nature of things with which we come in contact ; such as associate with athletes naturally develop their physical strength ; such as associate with mental giants naturally become mentally strong ; such as live in a pure moral atmosphere become morally strong, and such as become associated with those of great spiritual development become spiritually strong. This principle is discernable, yea ! even demonstrated in every life. Theatre goers well know that if the play is comical, or ludicrous that they will for the time being be completely possessed with a feeling of hilarity, if on the other hand it is tragic and sad, though only a sham, yet they become just as deeply moved with the sense of feeling that is portrayed before them. In looking upon paintings the observer's countenance will change the character of the pictures beheld, if the painting presents a thought of deep solemnity the observer reflects that thought on his countenance, if of hilarity, a smile will almost unconsciously steal over the face. This truth is not alone manifest in the mental realm, but also in the physical ; crude forgiveness come to our shores, coarse, homely, ill-proportioned in many instances, yet their off-spring in the first or second generation become completely changed in their physiognomy in harmony with those with whom they associate. This principle in nature was already well-known to Jacob of old and he